review contained an observation that "It is therefore important that India's trading partners assume their responsibility for assisting India's autonomous liberalisation process for ensuring market access and stable trading conditions for its developing export base". No specific suggestions were, however, submitted by the Secretariat in this regard.

Task Force on Leather Exports

1884. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have constituted a task Force to scrutinise important recommendations made by the Expert Committee on export of leather and leather products ;

(b) if so, the main functions of the Task Force :

(c) whether it is fact that export of leather and leather products has increased over the year ;

(d) if so, the extent to which the leather exports have increased in 1992-93 and during 1993-94 ; and

(e) whether the formation of this task force has increased leather exports ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A Task Force on Leather and Leather Products has been set up to analyse the factors which hinder the accelerated growth of exports in the Leather Sector and to monitor the achievements periodically with reference to the targets.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Leather & Leather Goods exports increased from Rs. 3076.24 crores in 1991-92 to 3692.48 crores in 1992-93 registering a growth of 20.03%. Export of Leather & Leather Products during the current year i.e., for the period April—November 1993 (latest available) amounted to Rs. 2648 crores as compared to Rs. 2405.03 crores during the corresponding period of previous year. The increase is 10.10%.

(SOURCE : D G C I & S)

(e) The Task Force has been formed recently and it is too early to analyse its import on leather exports.

Financial problems faced by small growers

1885. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of small tea growers are facing acute financial problems due to input-cost ;

(b) if so, the action being taken by Government in this regard ;

(c) whether there is any proposal under Governments consideration to provide financial assistance to small tea growers in this budget ;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) There has been overall increase in the cost of inputs between 1991-92 and 1992-93.

(b) The following steps have been initiated to help the growers in this regard :—

(i) Revised unit costs for various items connected with tea plantation development have been announced by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development and the revised costs have been given effect from 1-4-92 by all Commercial Banks and Land Development Banks.

(ii) Areawise standard unit cost of production have been revised by the sub-committee constituted by the Reserve Bank's Standing Committee on finance. The revised costs would serve as an indicator to the short term working capital limit to be determined by the commercial banks for the year 1994-95.

(c) to (e) Tea board provides financial assistance by way of loan, capital subsidy and interest subsidy on bank loans for

developmental activities of tea industry including small growers. In order to encourage small tea growers to take up tea cultivation, the Board has been operating a special input and interest subsidy scheme. Under this scheme capital subsidy @ Rs. 15,000 per hectare is provided towards cost of inputs such as planting material, fertilizers etc. In addition to this interest subsidy on bank loan is also provided @ 5.1% p.a. subject to maximum loan amount of Rs. 16,000 per hecture.

Besides, special assistance is also extended by the Tea Board to small growers for setting up of tea nurseries, demonstration plots, clonal multiplicational centres, training centres, free advisory services, setting up of cooperative tea factories etc.

It has been proposed to include two new schemes for the benefit of small tea growers viz. Tea Area Infilling Subsidy Scheme, and Special area development schemes for U.P. and Himachal Pradesh, during 1994-95.

India's export share

1886. DR. NARRE DDY THULASI REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) what is India's export share in the total world trade ;

(b) what steps are being proposed to push up India's exports ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) India's share in the world export during the year 1991 is estimated at *0.5%.

(*Economic Survey 1993-94).

(b) In order to increase exports the Government have taken major steps for liberalisation of trade which include promotion of exportlinked imports, reduction of import licensing, strengthening of export incentives, removal of procedural irritants through simplification of policy and procedures and pruning of negative list of exports. In the Budget for 1994-95 these measures have been further re-inforced by introduction of convertibility of rupee on the current account reduction in customs and excise duties and rationalisation of their structure etc. Also exporters have been allowed to retain a higher percentage (from 15% to 20%) of their foreign exchange earnings to enable them to avoid conversion cost for making payments for imports. In the case of 100% export oriented units in Export Processing Zones, Electronic Hardware Technology Parks and Software Technology Parks the limit of retention of foreign exchange earnings has been enhanced to 50%.

Falling image of Footwear Manufacturers and leather industry in Kuwait

1887. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of Governments has been drawn to the report appearing in Hindu dated the 28th December, 1993 regarding failing image of Indian footwear manufacturers and leather industry in Kuwait and the possibility of its losing the entire gulf market ; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to the report.

(b) The Indian Embassy in Kuwait had taken up the matter with the Kuwaiti authorities. It appears that a design on the soles of a particular consignment of shoes was misconstrued by some parties. Our Embassy has informally learnt that the Kuwaiti authorities are treating the matter as closed.

Workshop at Bangalore on Floriculture

1888. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) wheher Government are aware of the consensus at the workshop recently